

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 3, No 125

Threepence

November 7 1959

**Miners, Railwaymen, Engineers, Dockers, Motor Car Workers,
Labour Party Members and Students
are Coming to the**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR

ONE more week to the National Assembly of Labour. From all parts of the country come reports of last minute preparations to bring the largest number of delegates and visitors possible to this historic gathering. We say without fear of contradiction that this will be the only conference since the end of the war where all sections of the Labour movement will be represented. That is what makes the National Assembly so unique and important for the future.

From Glasgow will come a strong delegation. Amongst those represented will be Babcock and Wilcox (boilermakers), Scottish Aviation, Sir John Brown's (land-boilers) and Sir William Arrol's.

From Liverpool will come dockers, harbour workers, builders and electricians. From the Lancashire and Yorkshire coalfields will come important delegations of miners.

From Manchester will come railway delegates who were in the forefront of the dining car dispute.

From Leeds will come engineers and Labour Party members; from Birmingham, motor car workers, electricians and engineers; from Coventry, building workers and engineers.

The large Standard Telephone Company shop stewards' committee will be officially represented by three delegates.

The Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War is sending observers.

There will be delegates from Labour Parties, Youth Sections, student organizations, Co-op parties and branches of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. There will be delegates who are members of the Communist Party.

St Pancras Town Hall, Sunday, November 15 will be a historic landmark in the fight against Toryism and the Right-wing Labour and trade union leaders.

Railway Strike Ends

By Our Industrial Correspondent

By 16 votes to 13, the railway dining car strike committee decided to return to work after they were given an assurance that the union would support their demand that the three new Pullman services would be manned by staff from the British Railways hotels and catering services. Mr C. Evans, president of the National Union of Railwaymen, assured strikers that the union would also seek the abolition of the Pullman services.

This is a victory for rank-and-file action. By spreading their strike from region to region and by standing firm with their fellow-workers in other areas, the dining car men were able to cut through the red tape of procedure and negotiate direct with the executive of their union.

The strike has achieved two things. It has effectively exposed Mr Sidney Greene, general secretary of the NUR, and it has demonstrated for all to see that rank-and-file action can get things done.

The dining car men should maintain their strike committee and continue to strengthen its ties with railway workers throughout the country. Above all else, they should place no trust in the right-wing leaders of the NUR.

NAS & D Joins Campaign Against Dock Amendments

By BOB PENNINGTON

The campaign against the proposed amendments to the Dock Labour Scheme is gaining ground in dockland. The executive council of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers has now gone on record against the acceptance of any amendments. This development has taken place since the Dock Labour Board distributed its 'explanatory' leaflet. Contrary to the predictions of the capitalist Press more and more dockers are indignantly rejecting the amendments.

Mr William Lindley, secretary of the Lightermen, Bargemen and Tugmen's union attended the meeting of the NASD executive where the amendments were discussed. He stated the case for the amendments, but failed to convince anyone present that they were in the interests of portworkers. Mr Lindley also claimed that the amendments had the support of northern dockers.

This strange theory of Mr Lindley's is made all the more peculiar when one remembers that where northern dockers have had the chance to express themselves on the amendments

they have replied with an emphatic no!

In Hull a mass meeting of Transport and General Workers' Union members and NASD men not only decided to reject the amendments but set up a rank-and-file committee to campaign nationally against them.

Liverpool dockers previous to this had already elected a joint 'blue' and 'white' committee in the North-end docks to oppose the amendments.

This latest stand taken by the NASD executive council is welcomed. However, if it is to be effective then the NASD

(Continued on page 315)

THE NEWSLETTER
 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4
 Telephone Macaulay 7029
 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1959

PODOLA

IN Wandsworth Jail the death cell is divided into two parts. One half holds you safe until the time comes to break your neck.

As you sit on your bed you face a green door, the entrance to the other half which is the hang-house proper. You pass through that door but once.

Prisoners in Wandsworth Jail walk by the execution chamber every Monday morning on their way to the laundry. The more unfortunate inmates of the punishment cells live under and over it.

The most terrible thing about a hanging for the prisoners in Wandsworth is that they have to live with it before and after the grisly event. 'When a man dies,' said an old lag once, 'we all die.'

That is why as the hour of hanging approaches the prisoners violently beat, tear and howl like stricken animals. In spite of the strictest discipline, the unfortunate men who inhabit Wandsworth Jail show far more humanitarian instincts than the newspaper proprietors and their editorial lackeys in Fleet Street. What a pity these gentlemen cannot inhabit the cells above and below the hangman's chamber during the fatal hours.

On Wednesday morning the Press, stretching from the Liberal News Chronicle to the positively degrading Daily Sketch, presented such a satisfied front over the hanging of Podola that it would strike terror into the heart of a brute beast. The Daily Sketch talked about the hangman being a friend of Raymond Purdy, the unfortunate man who was murdered. Presumably this makes the hanging all the more sweet in the eyes of the Sketch.

Trade unionists and members of the Labour movement who have been the victims of witch-hunting from this filthy rag will take note of this stand on Podola's execution.

Hanging is a weapon of terror which has a place in only the most degenerate forms of rule. The Daily Worker is strangely silent about hanging. Mr George Matthews, the editor, who kept silent over the long imprisonment of Edith Bone in Hungary, knows full well that the possibilities are that as Podola passes through the green door, eighteen-year-old students in Hungary will be pinioned against a large pillar while rough black hoods are dragged over their heads and the hangman waits with his rope from behind to garrot them. That was how Lazlo Rajk died.

Stalinism and imperialism as methods of rule are an excrescence on society. Every human being proud of being alive demands that hanging should be abolished, but only socialism can speed that day. There is no socialism in Hungary, we still smart under imperialist rule in Britain. Speed the day of the emancipation of the human race from all forms of tyranny.

Campaign Notebook

Cheap Coach Trips to the National Assembly of Labour

Will all those who are interested, please contact their local Assembly organizer *immediately*.

BIRMINGHAM:

Mrs O. M. Finch, 83 Finnemore Road, Bordesley Green, Birmingham 9. (Phone: Victoria 3819).

The return fare will be 12s. 6d.

COVENTRY:

R. Perry, 128 Westcotes, Tile Hill, Coventry.

GLASGOW:

A. McLarty, 3 Anderson Street, Glasgow, W.1.

HULL:

R. Bradbury, 7 Elm Avenue, Garden Village, Hull.

Arrangements can also be made to pick up delegates and visitors en route. Write to the Secretary, National Assembly of Labour, 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4. (Phone Macaulay 7029).

LEEDS:

G. Gale, 65 Crossgates Road, Leeds, 15. (Phone Leeds 648942). Return fare will be 35s.

LEICESTER:

A. Stanley, 69 New Parks Boulevard, Leicester.

LIVERPOOL:

W. Hunter, 25 Huskisson Street, Liverpool, 8. (Phone: Royal 7734).

MANCHESTER:

H. Ratner, 26 Manley Street, Salford 7. (Phone: Broughton 3465).

NOTTINGHAM:

R. Shaw, 65 Stotfield Road, Bilborough, Nottingham. (Phone: Limetree 792)

**Forward to the
 National Assembly of Labour!**

**St Pancras Town Hall, London N.W.1.
 Sunday, November 15th 10 a.m.**
 For delegates and visitors tickets write to the secretary,
 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

SOCIALISTS AND DISARMAMENT

Communist Party Supports Right-wing Labour Policies

By G. HEALY

The Daily Worker editorial of November 2 asked the question: 'Is disarmament possible while capitalism continues to exist?' The answer the Daily Worker gave was, in effect, yes, and it concluded its editorial with the statement that: 'The advance of socialism can take place without the loss of millions of lives and with the least possible hardship to humanity.'

The leaders of the Communist Party responsible for this editorial are getting ready for a new period of class-collaboration. On the question of disarmament they find themselves in the company of the Right-wing Labour leaders who, ever since the 1914-1918 war, have been sermonizing on the grandeur of disarmament. Meanwhile, millions of people have lost their lives in capitalist wars. Small wonder the editor of the Daily Worker found difficulty in quoting historical precedents to justify his argument that capitalism can be got rid of without tears, so to speak. There are no such precedents.

The editorial talks about the concern among capitalists over the effects of 'the arms race and the burden it means, especially when socialism is challenging capitalism in the economic field.'

Competition between capitalist countries has always expressed itself in the export drive for new markets backed up by a constant search for cheap sources of raw materials, and a drive to reduce wages.

The effects of this competition lead to a crisis of over-production when the existing markets are exhausted. To re-divide these markets the capitalists go to war. Herein lies the basic reason for the first and second world wars.

If we are to take the Daily Worker's policy of competition between the Soviet Union and the capitalist nations seriously, we may well ask where it will end. What markets are involved and what will happen when these markets are exhausted?

Further to this there is the undying hatred of the capitalists for the nationalized property relations in the USSR, which is in itself a source of friction. The Daily Worker assumes a lot when it argues that these basic conflicts can be charmed away by disarmament.

The future of the USSR depends upon the class struggle

Marxists maintain that the future of the USSR can only be decided in the struggle between the forces of the international working class and world imperialism. We believe that it is impossible for the status quo to prevail in this conflict. The Communist Party maintains that if ways and means are discovered to prevent a war by peaceful co-existence then capitalism will grow steadily weaker and eventually collapse.

Since 1945, however, the preservation of the status quo has led to the strengthening of the Right-wing all over Western Europe. This was underlined by the Tory victory a few weeks ago. In spite of the economic advances of the Soviet Union in that period, the capitalist nations which surround the USSR have more strongly entrenched Right-wing governments now than at any time since 1945. The Soviet Union, whose fate depends upon the struggle of the international working class is correspondingly weaker.

There is no getting round the fact that the fight for socialism is based on the class struggle. The Soviet Union is itself the product of that struggle. This is not a peaceful pursuit, chiefly because the capitalists will not hand over their profits and property to the socialists, nor will they disarm because the Daily Worker asks them to.

The drive for profit

The Daily Worker paints too rosy a picture of capitalist society. It poses the question: 'If disarmament is carried through does it inevitably mean full-scale depression and mass unemployment?' It replies: 'On the contrary, it would open up new possibilities for the people to fight against crisis and unemployment. In the capitalist countries themselves millions

of new houses, schools and hospitals are urgently needed . . . in the underdeveloped countries there is a vast potential market. They need industrial goods to build up their industry and agriculture.'

All these things are very true, there has always been a need for schools, homes and hospitals in Britain, and the squalor and misery of the British colonies is not something that has been discovered in recent years. But these needs did not prevent capitalism from embarking on the first and second world wars for the simple reason that the essence of capitalism is investment for profit. Its job is not that of a pious benefactor to humanity.

Capitalism has not resolved the problems of under-developed countries or the shortage of housing, hospitals and schools, simply because investment in these things does not provide a fresh source of profit.

Try as it may, the Daily Worker cannot get over the fundamental conflict between the economic systems of the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, and the contradictions in capitalism inherent in its system of profit-making and greed.

Imperialists, Soviet bureaucrats opposed to class war

The present bureaucratic leaders of the Soviet Union, whose every word is law to the editor of the Daily Worker, want to avoid at all costs the extension of the class struggle to the point where the working class take power under their own revolutionary parties.

Every Communist Party member working in a factory in Britain today is aware of the class struggle and of the unbridgeable gulf between him and the employer.

Every colonial worker in the vast continent of Asia is aware of the same thing. That is why the great Chinese revolution, far from having spent itself, is coming constantly in conflict with outgrown feudal relations, as in Tibet, and also with the capitalist Nehru regime of India.

The Class Struggle is All-powerful

It is the class struggle in Britain and the class struggle in Asia which is responsible for a continuous disruption of the plans of the bureaucrats in the Soviet Union and those of the capitalists. Washington, like Downing Street before the war, talks about disarmament in order to sow illusions among the working class, thereby enabling it to defeat this class in the struggles that lie ahead.

The bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is mortally afraid of this working class because the day that it is victorious will be the day that working-class democracy will return to the Soviet Union.

The Daily Worker, far from making a fresh discovery about new roads to socialism by peaceful means, is in fact playing a role of confusion which may well threaten the human race with extinction.

INDUSTRY

POWER WORKERS FIGHT FOR 40-HOUR WEEK

by Brian Behan

A national committee of rank-and-file delegates from power stations as far apart as London and Birmingham will meet on Saturday to consider what action they should take to compel the British Electricity Authority to meet their demands for a 40-hour week and a third week's annual holiday.

The men are fed up with the delaying tactics of the Board. They know that last year the employers made £27 million profit, more than enough to meet their claim.

What is not so well known is that this profit was after paying out fantastic sums to the old owners. For example, since 1947 the power industry has made a total of £906 million profit. The colossal sum of £313 million has been paid out in interest on stock held by the former share-holders.

It can be easily understood that if the demand of the Socialist Labour League for an end to compensation and the introduction of workers' control were realized workers in the power industry could immediately enjoy an improvement in their wages and conditions.

Key position

There is a real movement in the power stations determined to fight for their claims. The men know that theirs is such a key position that no government could withstand a large scale stoppage.

The men at Bankside have set the ball rolling by banning all overtime.

As overtime working is one of the mainstays of their wage packet there can be no doubt that the firmness with which they are continuing the ban shows their determination to secure the shorter working week.

There is no such determination on the part of the officials. On the contrary they are working night and day to prevent the extension of the overtime ban.

Officials in the midlands and in London are trying to stop their members joining Bankside. In addition they are issuing circulars including statements like:

'The history of negotiations in the power industry have always proved themselves to be capable of settlement within a far shorter time than in most industries. It is hoped therefore that our members will permit the current negotiations to be concluded in a manner and an atmosphere where the best interests of our members and the industry will be best served. It must therefore be understood that any premature action at this stage in connection with overtime bans and 24-hour stoppages will not assist the chief officers of the union in getting the best results.'

Official retreat

The men's reply to this is that even though the claim was first agreed upon last April, nothing has so far been secured. The union leaders have already retreated by dropping a claim for an increase in the basic rate, which was part of the original claim.

The grounds for not even submitting a claim for an increase to the Board were, in the words of one general secretary: 'We are not satisfied that we have real grounds for demanding a rise.' This despite the record profits and interest payments to the old parasites.

In fact the men claim that the union leaders have agreed to a wage cut for some men, through the recent agreement on payment for shift work.

When speaking about the need to fight the Board with more than talk, the men point to the Barking strike of 1947. The

men at that station were able to retain a 7 per cent. bonus for all employed in the station, and not as in other stations only those who were employed before vesting day.

Some power workers feel that the ban on overtime begun at Bankside should not be extended to all other stations. This, as one worker put it, 'could culminate in a national stoppage on November 18', the day the Board meets the unions again to give a reply to the claim.

Power workers will be coming to the National Assembly of Labour, where one of the main aims will be to unite all those who are struggling for the 40-hour week.

RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENT SET UP IN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD

By Our Industrial Correspondent

A rank-and-file movement, linking active trade unionists in various industries was formed at a meeting held in Salford last week.

The meeting was sponsored by Salford engineering shop stewards, building workers and a number of Salford Amalgamated Engineering Union branches. It discussed the need to build a militant rank-and-file to meet the sharp attacks being prepared by the employers, aided by the witch-hunting of Right-wing trade union leaders.

Speakers stressed the need for unity between rank-and-file militants in all industries and the need to fight within the movement for the enforcement of militant policies (in many cases already on paper as official union policy). Our job was to force the unions to fight for them. Only the rank and file could do the job.

Militants from building, engineering, mining, railways, clothing and textile industries agreed to set up a rank-and-file Wages and Hours Campaign Committee.

Two delegates were elected to the National Assembly of Labour on November 15. Delegates were also elected to attend the conference called by the Briggs Bodies and other stewards on December 6.

Regular monthly meetings will be held and plans were agreed to broaden the movement, for factory and job meetings and a big public meeting.

THE DAILY MIRROR AND UNOFFICIAL STRIKES

by Brian Behan

The Daily Mirror of October 28 devoted its front and back pages to denouncing what it terms 'wildcat strikes'. It calls on the Trades Union Congress to act to stop this scandal.

Apparently the Mirror is not content to castrate the bull Ferdinand, it wants to extend its activities to working men.

The vast majority of unofficial strikes are fully justified. Nearly all of them are strikes in defence of workers' conditions. They are not anti-trade union activities, the strikers are, in fact, defending the basic aims of trade unionism.

At the Renault works in London, strikers are fighting against the victimization of a union militant. In Sheffield, bus and tram drivers are struggling to prevent the worsening of their conditions.

The Liverpool tugmen are striking to force the employers to honour an agreement on meal breaks. The railwaymen are striking not only against redundancy and loss of earnings, they are upholding a decision of their union conference held last July.

This is not anti-union activity. It is the employers and 'the trade union leaders who arrive at decisions without consulting their members who are the real conspirators.

Strikes are spreading because the employers, with government backing, are trying to drive down the standards of the working class.

Instead of crawling around talking of inquiries, the TUC

should be mobilizing the full power of the working class to fight the employers. Instead of banning conferences of shop stewards under the pretext of red plots, Carron and company should be calling such meetings themselves.

The National Assembly of Labour could not have been convened at a better time. All those workers engaged in struggle should elect delegates to the Assembly, and come as visitors, so that we can have a discussion on how to unite our efforts.

The Socialist Labour League rejects the notion that unemployment or wage cuts are good or necessary. In a socialist society, the working class with power in their hands will be able to direct all the great new sources of energy, atomic power and automation for the benefit of the working class and not as now to increase the profits of a handful of parasites.

SHEFFIELD BUSMEN HECKLE UNION OFFICIAL

Sheffield

Monday

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Mr A. J. Townsend, national secretary of the passenger group of the Transport and General Workers' Union got a rough handling at Sheffield today.

Over 1700 busworkers contemptuously rejected his appeal for a return to work. They decided, with only 27 votes against, to continue their struggle for no standing passengers on 69, 76 and 78 seater buses.

Townsend was constantly interrupted during his appeal to the men. Cries of 'Judas' greeted his argument that there could be no settlement unless they returned to work on the Transport Committee's terms.

So lengthy and involved was his speech, which all boiled down to going back with nothing gained, that there was a constant stream of workers going out for a smoke until he had finished.

Strikers angry

Townsend angered the workers by persistently ignoring the fact that when the 1948 agreement for eight standing passengers was reached the largest bus was a 56 seater.

One speaker from the floor, driver 'Jock' Harrow wanted to know if there was 'an agreement in black and white to take eight standing passengers on 69, 76 and 78 seater buses.' Many people felt that Townsend evaded this question. Brother Harrow went on to say that Sheffield was leading the fight for all busmen.

Speaker after speaker from the floor and from the Branch Committee reiterated the determination to fight on and attacked the union leadership. Typical was Bro. Mellorish who asked if the leaders would sell them out as they did the London busmen.

Brother Ludlow asked why the Sheffield workers received no lock-out pay, yet the union could pay £50,000 for a memorial to Ernest Bevin at the Churchill College.

Another speaker, Bro. Schofield, asked why Townsend could speak about three months' notice to terminate an agreement when the management have presented the workers with ultimatums at less than three minutes' notice.

Extend strike call

Driver Ted Fisher said he had been to see busmen at Chesterfield and Rotherham and had received enthusiastic support. Committeeman Wilf Amshaw was loudly cheered when he spoke of the determination of all Sheffield busworkers to fight for a complete victory.

In his reply, Townsend said that 'Sheffield men were taking on not just the Sheffield Council but the whole employers' organization and possibly the government too.'

Many busmen felt that the only way to meet this was to call on all other busmen to support them.

Mr Jack Leonards, regional trade group officer of the TGWU reported that the general secretary of the union had decided that no lock-out pay could be awarded unless the crews returned to work. This didn't prevent the crews from voting overwhelmingly to stay out.

Newsletter leaflet appreciated

The Newsletter leaflet written by London busman Geoff Kennedy was enthusiastically received by Sheffield busworkers. The strike committee reproduced the leaflet for further distribution and sent copies to every bus branch in the country, together with an appeal for financial help.

The Newsletter reports of the strike were also well received and over 500 copies were sold in Sheffield. Some busmen took copies of the paper and the leaflet to Rotherham, Chesterfield and Doncaster.

Thursday morning, as we go to press, we learn that the Sheffield bus workers have decided to return to work by a vote of 592 to 514. The decision was taken in the utmost confusion, and a full report of what happened will be in next week's issue of The Newsletter.

DOCK BUILDERS STRIKE FOR MORE PAY

by W. Hunter

THIRTY members of the Constructional Engineering Union building new dock gates in the north end of Liverpool came out on strike last week.

The men are employed by Sir William Arrol. Only six weeks ago they forced the firm to recognize a shop steward after they had stopped work for a day.

Since then they have been demanding extra pay for abnormal work such as the continuous handling of steel covered in wet red lead, and working in a space with four feet of headroom.

The men declare that although the firm demands accuracy and speed from its workers it refuses to pay a lieu bonus.

A duplicated statement issued by the strike committee says that the rates paid on this job are 'the lowest in the district on a CEU organized site.'

It adds, 'Our demands have passed through all stages of negotiation up to Masters' Federation level. The complete refusal of our claims is a pointer to the future attitude which will be adopted by the employers and their federation in an attempt to demoralize and destroy trade unionism.'

NASD JOINS CAMPAIGN (Continued from front page)

must begin to act now on the lines suggested by a number of its London branches. Resolutions sent in from 'blue' union branches calling for dock gate meetings would help to prepare dockers of all unions for the fight that is coming up.

The London Star, which naturally welcomed the NJC leaflet, said: 'When men know the facts they are not deceived.' How true. The NASD, together with the unofficial rank-and-file committees should now start a campaign ensuring that dockers are given the facts.

The October-November LABOUR REVIEW includes:

The Full Story of the Shell Mex Strike (The Politics of South Bank' by R. PENNINGTON)

Socialists and the Summit

Marxism in Britain—1881-1920

Special eight-page autumn book supplement

price 2s. 5d. post paid. Order from New Park Publications,
186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

SOME LESSONS FROM HISTORY

THE LEFT REVIEW 1934-1938

by BRIAN PEARCE

MIDDLE-aged people often tend to idealize their youth. It comes hard to those in their forties to review critically the activities which they pursued in their twenties.

Perhaps the choice of the title *New Left Review* for the forthcoming amalgamated version of the *New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review* owes nothing to any nostalgic reminiscences of the *Left Review* of 1934-1938, predecessor of the *Modern Quarterly*. But on the other hand, perhaps it does; and we certainly know that among the older members of the circle responsible for the new journal a somewhat rosy picture of the 'old Left' of the 1930s persists strongly and influences their thinking about the present and future.

Nothing could be more dangerous today than revival of the illusions which dominated that 'old Left'. One of the chief sources of the confusion and worse in 'new Left' quarters, and in particular of their hostile attitude to the Socialist Labour League, is to be found in the fact that though these people have broken with Stalinism they have not undertaken a thorough analysis of what they repudiate, have not seen the connexion between the apparently contradictory features of Stalinism at different times or even at one time, and so they remain unconsciously open to influence by false ideas absorbed during their period in the Stalinist camp.

Origins of Left Review

A brief examination of the old *Left Review* may start some useful trains of thought in any adherents of the 'new left' who chance to read this article.

Left Review began in October 1934, founded by a group of Communist Party and fellow-travelling writers. It gave expression to the wave of anti-fascist, anti-war and to some extent anti-capitalist feeling which had then arisen among considerable sections of the students and the younger intellectuals generally.

In its early numbers, *Left Review* devoted itself to exposing militarism and imperialism and all reactionary trends, through articles, stories, poems, reviews and cartoons. Its manner suffered from the schematic and sectarian features characteristic of the Comintern's 'third period', but nevertheless it left no doubt where it stood in the class struggle and it tried to interest readers in the Marxist classics.

The journal participated with considerable effect in the campaign against the Incitement to Disaffection Bill and carried such articles as 'Pens Dipped in Poison', by Charles Madge, on the treason of the intellectuals who became warmongers in the 1914-1918 war.

But right from the very first number, *Left Review* revealed where its basic allegiance lay, with a poem by Louis Aragon glorifying the speed-up in a Soviet tractor-works. And in the number for February 1935 Tom Wintringham, one of the co-editors, launched a violent attack on Max Eastman's book 'Artists in Uniform', which had shaken illusions among some left-wing intellectuals about the position of literature and the writer in the Soviet Union. A characteristic jolly-them-along phrase in Wintringham's article ran: 'Not a few bureaucratic absurdities have happened at times during the Soviet Revolution. And as soon as the Party has been able to be quite clear on what it is all about—they go.' (Wintringham was himself expelled from the Communist Party only a few years later, for keeping company with the daughter of an alleged Trotskyist.)

Left Review capitulates to the Soviet bureaucracy

A journal whose editors entrusted their consciences to the Soviet bureaucracy was bound sooner or later to reflect the major turn in Soviet policy, constituting the final and complete break with the policy of world revolution, the ultimate maturing of Stalinism, which occurred in and after 1935.

During that year, *Left Review* still carried such contributions as 'James Connolly and Another Jubilee', by Charles Donnelly, in the April issue, in which the story of the demonstrations organized by Connolly against Queen Victoria's

diamond jubilee was told, in 'honour' of the silver jubilee of George V then being celebrated as a Tory election stunt. But by 1936 a deep change becomes apparent, and this gets more and more marked as that year progresses.

Marxism and the class struggle (as distinct from stories in which poverty and misery are described and contemplated) fade out from the pages of *Left Review*. Curiosities like the following become not infrequent; 'It is hard to believe that anyone with a normal and balanced sexual life could be an ardent Fascist' (February 1936).

Aragon dismissed renewed worries about the position of literature in the USSR with the pointed remark: 'It has been noticed how often Trotskyists have been in line with reactionaries,' (May 1936).

At last, in August 1936, the cat comes fully out of the bag: 'We urge our readers to popularize the building of a People's Front in this country, based on the alliance of all those political groups and individuals who support a programme for immediate reforms—for improved conditions for workers of every sort, for the maintenance of peace through collective security; for the extension of civil liberties at home and the granting of equal rights to the colonial peoples.'

From anti-Trotskyism to class collaboration

As the class-collaborationist implications of the new policy were made more and more explicit, so the poisonous smoke-screen against Marxism (Trotskyism) was systematically thickened. Thus, on the one hand, the editorial in the March 1937 number hailed the filling of the Albert Hall by a *Left Book Club* meeting as a sign of 'the revival in Britain of the Liberal spirit'; in the June 1937 number we read that 'on May 1 and 2 organized Labour revealed itself as the real leader of every section of the people'; and in the August 1937 number Hamilton Fyfe reviewed approvingly Cole's book 'The People's Front', expressing conviction that Labour could not win alone, that it was necessary to get at the large body of unattached voters' who could 'be won, not yet for Socialism, but for pooled security and a limited programme of democratic social legislation and economic control'.

On the other hand, T. A. Jackson put over the Moscow trials ('scrupulous fairness of the trial . . . unquestionable and entire guiltiness of the accused . . . it all began with lack of faith . . . no-one with any sense of evidence can retain any doubts') and R. F. Andrews (Andrew Rothstein) told how 'criminal disruption' was characteristic of 'the dupes of Trotsky', and his 'policy of counter-revolution' (March and June 1937).

In November 1937 the publisher Frederick Warburg revealed in a letter to the *New Statesman* that *Left Review* had refused an advertisement for 'The Case of Leon Trotsky', published by his firm. This book was the report of the examination of Trotsky, regarding the statements affecting him made in the trials, carried out by an independent commission of inquiry headed by John Dewey.

Evidently the new liberalism of *Left Review* did not include giving a show to the other side. Editor Randall Swingler explained on behalf of the journal, in the next issue of the *New Statesman*, that 'there is a line at which criticism ends and destructive attacks begin, and we regret that this line

separates us both from Dr Goebbels and Leon Trotsky.'

The last-but-one issue of *Left Review* (April 1938) included a review of a book by Eleanor Rathbone in which she prophesied the pact between Stalin and Hitler which was actually signed in the following year. 'An idea like that could only occur to Miss Rathbone!' laughed the reviewer.

That was typical of the ridicule which alternated with abuse and misrepresentation as the method of preventing any objective, scientific examination by *Left Review* addicts of the realities of the political situation, the actual class forces at work in the world. This was an essential condition for selling them the 'people's front and collective security' line which led Britain and the world into such a monumental succession of disasters in 1939, 1940 and 1941.

Surely there are lessons to be drawn from the story of the old *Left Review* for the guidance of the new one?

IRELAND

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STALINIST-CONTROLLED CONNOLLY ASSOCIATION

by Pat O'Donovan

WITH its malicious attacks on the Socialist Labour League increasing, many people, especially Irish workers in industry, want to know the truth about the Connolly Association, and what policy and ideology its paper, the *Irish Democrat*, really represents.

Before its attacks on the League the Connolly Association seemed to many to be simply a loose left-wing Irish group who sporadically campaigned for the ending of Partition.

And though James Connolly's socialist teachings never appeared in the *Irish Democrat*, nobody attached anything sinister to their absence, except to think it somewhat strange that Connolly's dynamic solution to Ireland's problems had been rejected by those who named their organization after him.

Now at last, with its bitter invectives against the Socialist Labour League, the true character of the Connolly Association is being exposed, and what we see is not a nationalist organization, but a sordid Stalinist set-up, operating Stalinist policies, and directly controlled by the Communist Party from King Street.

And if there are any doubts about this, a quick look at the Connolly Association's record should dispel them.

Join the British Army

During the war the Connolly Association pleaded with Irish workers to join the British Army and fight for 'freedom' under the Union Jack.

Years later, in 1953, after the death of the bureaucratic monster Stalin, the *Irish Democrat* in a long article paid glowing tributes to his life and deeds . . . some deeds. But when Stalin was partly exposed for the evil creature he was by Khrushchev, the *Irish Democrat* was silent.

It was also lost for words when the same Khrushchev directed the bloody suppression of the Hungarian workers.

But perhaps the most positive indictment of the Connolly Association occurred at the time of the mass sacking of Irish workers and others by McAlpine at the South Bank. When, at a meeting of the Association, it was proposed from the floor that a telegram of support and sympathy be sent to the strike committee, this was opposed by no less person than the editor of the *Irish Democrat*, Mr C. D. Greaves, who argued that the strike had 'nothing to do with the Connolly Association.'

'But,' said Mr Greaves, 'let us instead write a letter of protest to Mr McAlpine.'

However, Connollyism defeated Stalinism on that occasion, and Greaves and the other Stalinists present were repulsed by shocked members, most of whom—like this writer—are now in the Socialist Labour League.

Bearing all these factors in mind, it is not surprising that

the Socialist Labour League is being attacked by the Connolly Association and in particular by Mr Greaves, who is after all only the willing tool of King Street, where it is reported that his master, Mr Palme Dutt, gives him details of the latest party line whenever the phone rings from Moscow.

But Mr Greaves and Mr Palme Dutt and their capitalist associates in Fleet Street are all fighting a losing battle slinging mud at the Socialist Labour League.

The day is coming when the League and an aroused working class in Ireland and Britain will sweep them aside forever. That is what James Connolly would have liked to see and that is the way it is going to be.

BRITISH JUSTICE FOR THE IRISH

by M. Shaw

Patrick O'Toole is 23, married with a 14-month-old son. On Thursday, October 29 he was gaoled for five years for stealing detonators and high explosive from the National Coal Board, although he was acquitted of a charge of having the explosive in his possession for a suspected unlawful purpose.

It was stated that when arrested O'Toole claimed to be a member of the IRA, but during the four-day trial it was established that in fact he had no connexion with that organization, and the Recorder, Mr Christopher Shawcross, QC, said 'You are a man of exemplary character.'

Sentence was passed to 'deter people whose character is not as good as yours.'

Did anyone ever hear such a flimsy reason for sending a man to gaol for five years? Why was such a vicious sentence passed on O'Toole?

Contrast this with the case of Arthur Hibbert who, the previous day, pleaded guilty to having explosives in his possession for a suspected unlawful purpose.

'You are not a member of the IRA I suppose?' said Mr Shawcross.

'No Sir,' replied Hibbert.

'Or an Irishman? Or a Catholic?'

'No Sir.'

'Very well, I will give you the benefit of the doubt. I accept your explanation. You may have been misguided in pleading guilty.'

Hibbert stated that he had kept the explosive to keep it safe from children. He was bound over to keep the peace for two years.

What a mockery of justice is the British institution which bears its name. If you are not Irish you get the benefit of the doubt. If you are an Irishman you get the maximum penalty, as an example to deter others.

LETTERS

THE S.L.L. AND INTELLECTUALS

BILL PARRY is living in a dream world created in part by himself and in part by the self-deluding organization for which he stooges. His 'intellectual' contribution in *The Newsletter* reached even lower than his infantile efforts of previous weeks.

He talks at the beginning of his article of the ferment of socialist ideas in University circles. Where are these circles? Is there one at Liverpool? If so, then it must be operating underground. The Labour Club here has very little influence, and the general political tone at this University is increasingly reactionary.

Mr Parry's analysis of what he calls the 'new left' is equally at variance with current and historical facts. No doubt he regards the 'new left' and the Socialist Labour League as one and the same thing. Surely he is aware that there are still some Marxists left who read Marx and Engels rather than Trotsky, Stalin, or even Fryer.

In the 1930s the Marxist movement progressed because of the heavy defeats which the working class sustained on the industrial and social fronts. Mr Parry assumes that the present movement will progress further than that of the 1930s, when, in the 1950s the working class has made considerable social and industrial advances. The recent election has shown that workers are not prepared to support left-wing policies in comparatively prosperous times. To talk of a massive Marxist renaissance in such a context is therefore totally fallacious.

Intellectuals are invited by Mr Parry to 'learn from, and participate with the growing body of Marxist workers in fashioning an organization for the overthrow of capitalism.' Does he really think that humanist intellectuals will join his narrowly sectarian conglomeration of irresponsible strike-makers, in which they will be treated as inferior beings whose names can be used to boost the intellectual standing of the Socialist Labour League?

The valid role of the thinker as a fearless and uncompromising propagator of truth would be completely forgotten. Parry also talks of intellectuals enriching Marxist theory. But The Newsletter has not made a single contribution to the theory of Marxism. Is this any inducement to thinkers to join your League?

Students who join the Socialist Labour League will become, as Mr Parry has become, controlled lackeys of a movement in which original thought is trammelled by the dictates of a leadership which considers itself to have a monopoly of the theories and ideas necessary for the establishment of a mass Socialist movement in Britain.

Liverpool University

G. Vernon
M. Ashton

BILL PARRY REPLIES

THE unsubstantiated assertions of Mr Vernon and Mr Ashton concerning my integrity and the attitude of the SLL towards intellectuals, hardly warrant reply.

If, as they claim, 'The valid role of the thinker' is to be 'a fearless and uncompromising propagator of the truth', our correspondents fail miserably in their self-appointed mission.

Where have I equated the 'New Left' with the 'SLL?' Which intellectuals 'are treated as inferior human beings?' When have SLL members been 'irresponsible strike-makers'?

Let us look, with our Liverpool friends, very briefly, and perhaps a little schematically, at current and historical facts. 1931: Labour suffered resounding defeats in the election. Many from the intelligentsia began to turn towards Socialism as a result of the moral and intellectual waste-land created by unemployment and the rise of Fascism. 1959: Labour suffered heavy defeats in the election. Many from the Universities are turning towards Marxism as a result of the vacuum left by the decline of Stalinism and the rightward turn in Europe.

The British working class is strongly organized, has suffered no major defeats and industrially is extremely confident. Stalinism is both impotent and unwilling to lead in the present situation.

Failure to grasp these new factors is tantamount to turning one's back on the enormous prospects for the real advance of the working class.

What pessimism to say, at least implicitly, that intellectuals will only move when the working class has been ground to dust! Especially in view of the anti-H-bomb campaign, the New Left, and, on a smaller scale, but more significant, of the advances made by the SLL in the universities.

If Messrs Vernon and Ashton have not even noticed the changing climate in University Socialist circles, it proves that it is **they** who are underground—which would explain their mole-like contribution to The Newsletter.

With a more varied vocabulary of invective, our correspondents should well qualify as professional poison-pen writers.

Constant Reader A Timely Book

Following the Labour Party's setback at the polls we may expect a period in which the main sphere of working-class political activity (in the broader and truer sense of the word 'political') will shift to industry. Because of the class-collaborationist line of the trade union bureaucrats, the struggle in industry will have to be conducted very much as a soldiers' battle, through rank-and-file movements.

In some respects, the period ahead resembles that which opened in 1911, when the Labour Party's serious losses in the two general elections of 1910 revealed the workers' loss of confidence in its leadership, owing to the latter's increasing assimilation to the Liberals whom they had originally set out to challenge.

That period saw unprecedented 'labour unrest' in which the shop stewards came into their own as the real leaders of the industrial workers. It came to an end with the great post-war depression which began at the end of 1920; but by then the Communist Party had emerged (to a considerable degree directly from this movement) and the Labour Party had been compelled to adjust itself to the mood of the workers by adopting a socialist programme.

The whole period is full of lessons relevant to problems of today, both for its achievements and for its disappointments. Of particular interest now are the discussions that went on around 'workers' control', which have a clear bearing on the question of what the difference is between capitalist nationalization and socialist nationalization.

A book published a few months ago by Basil Blackwell, of Oxford, gives a more comprehensive and detailed account of the period than has hitherto been available. It is 'The Shop

Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, 1910-1922', by Branko Pribicevic, a young Yugoslav scholar who worked at Nuffield College under the late G. D. H. Cole. (Cole was, of course, one of the leaders of 'Guild Socialism', an influential trend in the movement for workers' control of industry at the end of the first world war). There is a book to be read and studied by all militants. Make sure your local library has it—or get them to get it for you through the National Central Library.

JOHNNY THEY HARDLY KNOW YE

KHRUSHCHEV told the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party that what he called the cult of Stalin's personality had done grave damage to the Soviet Union. Those who criticized this cult in its beginnings were therefore, one presumes, rendering a service to the Soviet people, while those who tried to discourage such criticism were (at any rate objectively) 'anti-Soviet'.

'When comrades affected by social-democratic tittle-tattling ask the question: "Isn't Stalin being overpraised?" let them remember the role that Stalin played in this mighty transformation, and they will have their answer.'

Younger members of the Communist Party may be surprised to learn that the contributor of that great thought to the Communist Review for June 1935 was none other than John Ross Campbell, who now has the infernal cheek to accuse the Trotskyists of being anti-Soviet.

BRIAN PEARCE